

Employer Advisor

NEW 2018 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TAX RATES FOR UTAH BUSINESSES

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The majority of Utah's employers will see a reduction in their unemployment insurance tax rates for the 2018 calendar year. In 2018, more than 75 percent of Utah's established employers will qualify for the minimum contribution rate of approximately \$34 per employee per year — a 48 percent decrease from 2017. Utah's [taxable wage base](#) increased from \$33,100 to \$34,300 over the past year. Business-specific rate notices were sent to all employers starting November 29, 2017.

2017 will be the fourth consecutive year that Workforce Services collected less taxes from Utah employers. For calendar year 2017, Utah is projected to collect \$185 million in unemployment insurance taxes, which is approximately \$170 million less (a 47 percent reduction) than the amount collected in 2013.

Employers whose former employees were eligible for and received unemployment insurance benefits will see an adjustment in their 2018 contribution rates compared to 2017, with rates ranging from 0.1 percent to 7.1 percent. New employers will pay an industry average, ranging from 1.1 percent to 5.5 percent.

This reduction in taxes collected has not negatively impacted the solvency of Utah's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Annually, the United States Department of Labor produces the "State UI Trust Fund Solvency Report." This report provides information necessary for analyzing the solvency level of each state's trust fund. The 2017 report shows Utah's Trust Fund as the fourth healthiest trust fund in the nation.

"Proper calculation of the tax rate is critical to help ensure Utah's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund remains solvent during times of high unemployment and to ease the tax burden on employers to encourage economic growth," said Kevin Burt, Director of the Unemployment Insurance Division.



In November 2017, the U.S. Department of Labor recognized Utah's unemployment insurance contributions and appeals programs as demonstrating top performance nationwide in timely and high-quality work. Utah was recognized as the top performer from among the 25 medium-sized states. We would like to thank all employers for their participation in the unemployment insurance program and their commitment to a strong Utah economy.

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SEASONAL DEFERRALS

In the state of Utah, the Department of Workforce Services has elected to implement a seasonal deferral program, primarily because of the differing seasons and types of occupations typically impacted by changing weather conditions. The current seasonal deferral period began November 5, 2017, and will run through March 31, 2018. A deferred job seeker (claimant) is not required to register for work, or complete weekly work search requirements, but must meet all other able and available work requirements. A claimant qualifies for a seasonal deferral when:

1. Work is not available in the his/her primary base period occupation and other suitable work is not available in the area;
2. The majority of the claimants' base period wages are from seasonal employment; and, one of the following:
 - a. The claimant has a rural zip code (typically in the tourism industry);
 - b. Is weather affected (construction industry); or
 - c. Work is between seasons (ski resorts, golf courses, etc.).

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS AND HELP DESK TEAMS



Back Left to Right: Worthy Glover, Tom Woodland, Mark Sorenson, Angel Reyes, Scott Smith, Lyle Mansfield, Wade Nieslen, Gail Boyd, Heather Wilden.

Front Left to Right: Maria Orozco, Shannon Charlson, Michelle Ortega, Angel Brewer, Gabriela Ceja, Jenny Vasquez, Mary Ann Lawson, Kerry Herrman, Regan Jackson, Judy Gardner, Rachana Keo, Kim Lam.

The Unemployment Insurance Claims and Help Desk teams consist primarily of: 1) those who take and process new and reopened claims for unemployment benefits; 2) those who manage work queues to verify and enter wage information; and, 3) those who work one-on-one with claimants and employment center staff to resolve questions and concerns.

While there are rules and regulations, which need to be followed for all staff, the primary focus for all team members is to provide quality customer service by responding professionally to inquiries, educating customers and resolving issues. Thus far in calendar year 2017, the Claims center has received more than 70,000 calls to open claims for benefits and answer customer questions. Additionally, the Claims Center handled more than 35,000 customer chat sessions to address customer questions or provide other general assistance. Our Claims Center and Help Desk staff take pride in their dedication to provide exceptional customer service.